









A
LETTER

To a Merry
Young GENTLEMAN,
INTITULED,
Tho. Burnet, Esq;

In Answer to One writ by him to
the Right Honourable the Earl of *Halifax*; by which it plainly appears,
the said *Squire* was not awake when
he writ the said Letter.



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A N

ANSWER

To a LETTER to the

Lord *Halifax*.



THAT you may not suppose I write out of Enmity to you, I must take Leave, in the first Place, to assure you, that I am my self a perfect Man of Pleasure, and love a Joke as well as you can do. But at the same time, my dear Boy, you are not to top the *Socias* upon me; I am a little too well acquainted with the *Stage*, as well as the *Press*, to be impos'd upon that Way;

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though I confess thou art a clever Fellow, and hast performed wittily. — What, says an inquisitive very old Fellow, and a *Whig* too, *Tommy*, “ Is this “ *Burnet*, Son to the ~~Bishop~~ of *Sarum*? “ Lord, Sir, says I, can you wrong your “ Judgment so, to imagine that the Son “ of such a Father would write *Hackney*; “ That such a grave, sober young Fel- “ low as he is known to be; one who “ has a View to things of a higher Na- “ ture, a Genius more sublime and stea- “ dy, a hard Student in the Law, and “ just call’d to the Bar, as I presume you “ have hear’d he is, should give himself “ up to Trifles? He that ought only to “ pride himself in excelling in Oratory at “ the *Bar*, and being able to recite the “ most eminent Passages of the common “ Law, should begin with boasting of his “ Intent in writing Pamphlets and Libels, “ Tracts of a mean Value, on mean “ Subjects, and tag at the End of them “ a Tail of his great Performances, as “ though he was going to set himself “ out to Hire, by drawing down the whole “ Posse of Booksellers, Printers, and Pub- “ lishers, to put him to work: As if he “ should say, *Gentlemen, These things have “ I done ; there are two Motives to induce*
“ *me*

“ me to go on, the *C A U S E* and the
 “ *P E N C E*; consider of these, and I am
 “ at your Service: My Clients shall wait,
 “ and Coke upon *Littleton*, make room for
 “ the Tale of a Tub, or any other Sub-
 “ ject you can indite. No, Dear Sir, says
 “ I, have a greater Value for the Father,
 “ as well as the Son, than to mispend your
 “ Judgment so.

At which the old Gentleman, taking
 his Spectacles from his Nose, cry'd;
 — “ What an impudent Trick is this, to
 “ impose upon the World; I vow 'tis a
 “ Shame; he ought to be whipt for't.
 “ Ay, there's the Case, *Sir*, says I again;
 “ and yet this is done every Day. False
 “ Names, like false Dice, help to cheat
 “ People of their Money. Here you shall
 “ see a Pamphlet furnish'd with the Name
 “ of the Right Honourable the Countess
 “ of ———; another written by a Person
 “ of Honour; a third by the L ———
 “ B——, &c. And for Letters to Lords
 “ and Members of Parliament, the Stones
 “ on *Salisbury Plain* may as easily be
 “ counted.

I saw the Effect of my Conviction up-
 on the old Gentleman immediately; he
 pocketed his ocular Conveniencies, threw
 down thy Pamphlet in a Rage, and said,
 he

he should worse respect the Administration than he had done, if they did not make you give an Account of your self. And I must tell you, *Squire*, he spoke with some Reason, though I was unwilling, for the present, to inflame the old *Gentleman* further; for some will have it, that this Letter is writ with a View to draw the *Whigs* into Disgrace; and to keep up the present Temper of the Multitude, by making those People seem guilty of Revenge and Persecution, who are, of all others, the greatest Pretenders to the Love and Practice of Moderation.

Don't be angry with me, good *Squire*, if I tell you, this is no such unlikely Story; there are Grounds enough for such an Opinion: Not only that many of the seeming *Whig Pamphlets* are, 'tis thought, writ by disguis'd *Papists* or *Jacobites*, as well as some other of the contrary Side, to keep up the Spirit of Division; (for you see, *Squire*, I write like an honest Man, and one that has really as many loyal Thoughts for his King and Country, as you have, or at most seem to have, taking the Matter under the Sense of my last Construction) not only such things are done, I say, but doing you the Justice, if you desire it, to suppose you what
you

you call your self, *A young Man inflam'd with a rash, but honest Zeal against the late Ministry*: May not your Zeal be too rash, and shock the Men of your own Party? In Dedications we ought to have the Leave of a Great Man to affix his Name, before we pretend to do it; much more sure ought all Writers to obtain Licence before they make a Great Man's Name the Handle to distribute their Labours, and set them off to Sale, especially on things of so nice and high a Nature: And there are very few, however fond enough of the Subject, that will believe this Affair was ever concerted with any Body but your Book-seller.

Now, taking you under either of these two Denominations, *viz.* a profest *Tory*, or *Jacobite* in Disguise, writing with Design to draw an *Odium* on the *Whigs*, and the present Administration; or, really and individually, the very same *Tom. Burnet* would be thought to be, that arch and celebrated *Whig*, endeavouring to please the Party, by shewing Reasons for bringing the late Ministry to Judgment; the Case is yet to be consider'd, how far the Effect, as well as the Design, will answer: An Example of each Kind therefore may not be unnecessary.

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You may remember a few Years since, *The shortest Way with the Dissenters* was writ by a *Dissenter*, and then a *Whig* too, to draw an odium on the *Tories*, by representing them as Men desirous of *Persecution*, and that it would be no *Sin* for them to make minced Meat of all the *Dissenters*; this piece might have expected some Countenance under a *Tory*, as well as yours under a *Whig Administration*: But it will be worth your while, *Squire*, to reflect on the Author's *Reward*. I wish you much better Fortune; tho' I should think my self guilty of Flattery, did I not tell you, that the *Service* you have done, in reality, little exceeds what he designed the *Tories*.

On the other hand, The Person who lately wrote the Reasons for the Abolition of the *Thirtieth* of *January*, may, with justice enough, be allowed to write out of Principle, for he is a profest *Whig*, they say, if not a *Dissenter*. He had very probably some view to hope, that such a Subject might not be unacceptable to the *Whigs* in Play. He saw the Cause rub smoothly on, and judg'd a Novelty of that Kind might add something to the

the present Bias of it. We see he was mistaken, and question'd by that *Ministry* he thought to please, who, in the *Prosecution* of him, (if they proceed in it) will get more Honour, than the Countenancing of him would have procur'd them Discredit: But if this Man as it was first said, had been some *Jesuit*, or *Jack* in *Disguise*, I cannot but think it would have aggravated the Sense of his Crime to a very high degree: For as it appears now, he may plead it was to get a Peny, (which I hope is not your Case Squire,) which with some Reason, allowing that a *Man born must be kept*, will help to mitigate the Offence, and alleviate the Punishment.

Without taking on me to compare the Subjects of the two Pamphlets, I shall plainly tell you, *Squire*, that no honest and moderate Church *Whig*, but must look on your Book with Resentment; as they did upon the other: Had not the *Tories*, say they, Pretences enough before to cavil at the Court? Did they not lay hold of every little Thing, to multiply into Grievances? I assure you, *Squire*, you need not to have furnished

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them with any fresh Occasions, they have Arguments enough ready for you at their Fingers Ends; the present *Disposition* of the People all over the Kingdom, is an Instance of it. Such violent Methods as you are upon, are not the Ways to appease them; there must be healing Things applied, not burning Causticks.

As to your Self, 'Squire, I know what I have said would be sufficient; but since I have undertaken to publish my Letter in Print, the World will expect I should say something of yours by way of Answer. If this occasions me to be a little Serious, I know a Person of your Sedateness will do all you can to excuse me.

The World, dear *Squire*, quarrels with your Apology; they think it a vain Conceit to make a Merit of two or three idle *Pamphlets*, when there are many Gentlemen, who have writ as well, and as often, for the Constitution as your self, that are contented with the *Pay* of their Booksellers; and I can't hear, my dear *Squire*, that you writ merely for the sake of the CAUSE only, without tacking to it the more valuable Consideration of Copy Money; make the World sensible that
you

you have not always made a *Smithfield Bargain* with your Booksellers, and it will prove a greater Argument of your Zeal for the Constitution, and of your Merit too, than quoting from the Subject of your Works, or a Catalogue of *Title Pages*.

There are Gentlemen who have *continued firm in their former Opinions*, and Men who will still continue firm, without all this Bustle; Men who are well *satisfied too, that 'tis our present Happiness to be Governed by a Monarch, who has not failed to pay a due regard to the great Services and Abilities of his Lordship*. But this is no warrantable Reason, dear Squire, why all that had the Honour to be of the late Queen's last *Ministry* deserve to be hanged; or as you phrase it, *To be exalted to the highest POSTS in the Nation*; a *Pun* so wretched and Stale, that every *Punster* in Town grows weary of it. I would not mention this, but with submission to better Judgments, whether it either becomes a Man of Gravity, studious in the Laws; or the Son of a Right ~~Reverend~~.

The very mention of this, has almost brought me back to my first Notion, that you can be, dear *Squire*, nothing but an Impostor, an Assumer of the Name of that *Sober, Virtuous* young Gentleman, whose Character cannot but suffer under the Authority of your *Pen*. But if I should happen to be mistaken, and that you are *Tom Burnett*, the Son of *Gilbert*, I shall have a Pardon to ask of the World for leading them into a Mistake, though, I think, it would be laying an Obligation on you.

But if to oblige others, I must go contrary to my own Opinion, let the Hazard of being plainly understood lie at their *Doors*. You and I, *Squire*, I don't question, shall come to a better Understanding anon. For I can't help imagining that I shall be able to convince you, from Arguments very full of Loyalty and Affection to my King and Country, that we may be very happy, and *His Majesty* promise himself a *Peaceable Enjoyment of the British Throne*, without bringing Men to the Block, who we are not sure yet have deserved it, or ever will; and that cal-
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ling Men TRAITORS before they are
Convicted, is no Maxim in *Law*.

Not, dear *Squire*, that I pretend to
be versed in those Things equal to your
self; yet, as you apologize to his Lord-
ship, give me leave for once, to inform
you of Things which you are much better
acquainted with than my self; and by
the way, you ought to furnish me with
Instructions how to make good Sense
of it, if I am called in question. But
that shall be passed by.

There is one general beaten Path of
Attacking the late *Ministry*, which
you seem to tread with a great deal
of Pleasure and Facility. Let me see if
I can circumscribe these Articles within
the proper Bounds of an Epistle.

1. That they set on foot a clandestine
Negotiation of Peace, without the Pri-
vity of the Confederates.
2. That we
sacrificed our Allies, and abandoned the
Catalans to destruction.
3. That they
gave up our Trade to *France*, and kept
a Correspondence with the *Pretender*.
4. That they paid Pensions to *Scots*
Jacobites,

Jacobites, and squandred away the publick Treasure. I think all is comprehended in this.

To such, *Squire*, they answer; for this is a kind of trying them without Doors.

1. That the Negotiation was fair and open, and not conceal'd from the Allies, as is alledg'd; but the Overtures communicated to the *Dutch*, as soon as receiv'd by Her Majesty.

2. That Her Majesty was so far from sacrificing Her Allies, that She assur'd them She would make no Peace, but such an one wherein they should all find their Advantage, which might have been compleated, had not the ill Disposition of some at Home obstructed Her good Endeavours. And as to the *Catalans*, Her Majesty had obtained for them the full Enjoyment of their Rights and Privileges; but they refused to submit to any Body but the Emperor, and, by their own Obstinacy, made Her Majesty incapable of serving them further.

3. That

3. That as to our Trade, they insisted on, and obtained some Advantages; but if any thing unforeseen happen'd in the Execution of the Treaty, there is still the Right of complaining against it, and of obtaining Redress. And for a Correspondence with the *Pretender*, they desire, and wish that any who shall be convicted of it, may be made Examples of, by being exalted, as you say, *to the HIGHEST POSTS in the Nation.*

4. That if they paid Pensions [to *Scotch Jacobites*, they tell you the same was done by the glorious and immortal King *William*; and that the Reasons both then and now were very good. That as to the publick Treasure, they are ready to account for it whenever it is required.

Now, *Dear Squire*, between you and I, is there not as fair a Colour in this, as plausible a Complexion as a Man in their Interest could desire? For I must distinguish between their Friends and their Adversaries; Love covers many Defects, and Hatred will make Beauty seem

seem deform'd. The only Way that I see therefore is, for you and I, *Squire*, to drink *Tea* quietly, and leave these Matters to the Parliament. The bespeaking Impeachments, is what will never please disinterested People, nor indeed is there occasion for it; it is a Sort of arraighning the Judgment of those you would direct: Their Honour is concerned to take it from their own Conceptions; for either they must dislike your Advice, or approve your Reasons; and to say there was no Ground for the latter, but what arose from your Pamphlet, must be doing more Honour to your self, than those you pretend to advise.

Upon these Considerations it would not seem strange to me, if, instead of Merit, you should meet with a severe Jobation. It will be little Credit for them, in future Times, to have it said, "They may thank honest *Tom. Burnet* for the Hint: That arch, witty, young Knave gave the first Rise to the grand Impeachment." Nay, I have already heard you called, a *mettled Fellow* on this Occasion, and one that writes with a *Spirit*; by which they seem

seem to mean a pert Composition of Words.

I cannot but observe, *Squire*, that you tell his Lordship; *Some very cautious Men, at least such as make Caution their Pretence, may think it impolitick, if not unsafe, for a King but newly settled on the Throne, to begin with Executions, and with shedding of the Blood of his Subjects.* Certainly, *Squire*, you have in this touched one of the most moving Strings in the whole Gamut: And can any cautious good Man, think otherwise? Who that wishes well to so good a Prince, would not rather wish to see all compos'd with Lenity and Mercy; and that Spirit of Peace and Wisdom shine in Him, which he is so particularly fam'd for? This will sooner knit the Hearts of all honest *Britons* to Him, than *revenging their Wrongs* upon a few, who have been so unhappy to forfeit his Favour at present.

Were only one Side indeed to be pleased, the *Whigs* would generally, I believe, applaud your Notions of *wholesome Severities*; though, as I have observed, 'tis contrary to the *Moderation*

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they pretend to profess; but there are others who have a Claim to His Majesty's Regard as well as they. It would be no little Point to gain over the *moderate Tories*: I am sure it would strengthen His Majesty's Hands against His Enemies, and contribute to His peaceable Enjoyment of the Crown. And if this be granted, I know no Way so likely to accomplish this good End, as the exerting a Spirit of Peace and Forgiveness: The accommodating these things amicably, and closing all with an Act of Mercy, would win Him more Hearts, than all the Rigour you have, or can possibly prescribe.

In this, *Squire*, you and I differ in our Love to the King; I would have him shine in Acts of Mercy and Love, and you would illustrate him with Blood and Cruelty. Let the World be Judge, which Quality would sooner gain him the Hearts of his People. I believe no Man would pretend to say, you were in the Right; not even your Right ~~Reverend~~ Father, should I submit to make him Arbitrator of the Dispute, which, as *Æsop* says, would be next to making you Judge in your own Cause.

I have hitherto entertained some Hopes, that it were even possible, by degrees, to win over the *Jacobites*, by fair and gentle Usage, by repeated Acts of Goodness, and a proper Latitude of Indulgence, which might serve to convince them in Time of their Error; but never, *Dear Squire*, by the Rules you have laid down; that violent, persecuting Spirit, may make them desperate indeed, and harden their Hearts, but never mould them into good Subjects.

The only Method, say you, *of getting rid of them, is to crush the whole Nest at a Blow.* Prithee, what dost thou mean by this, *Dear Squire*, an honest Massacre, or a general Eclat of the *Scymiter*, or *Bow-string*? The whole Nest at a Blow! What Devil of a *Jesuit* could have thought of a more damnable Remedy? Hast thou forgot, *my dear Boy*, that the Massacre of a Handful only at *Glencoe*, was never claw'd out of King *William's* Scotcheon? And that where he crush'd one by it, he raised up Fifty *Jacobites* in their Rooms, who became inflamed at the Horror of the Action. I never knew those Acts of Cruelty take

with the People, especially the People of *England*; not even always where they have had the Sanction of the Law in Excuse for the Sovereign's Justice.

Little more do I approve of your Politics, *Squire*, *To command them to dispose of their Lands in this Nation, and remove their Persons together with their Effects into some other Country.* I cannot tell but this were an excellent Method to do the Business effectually, as you say, by sending the *Pretender* Men and Money enough to make a dangerous Invasion, when it is to be question'd whether his Friends would pay the *Purchase Money* again or no. No prithee, dear *Squire*, let us have none of these hazardous Experiments; thou knowest we have no Law to do it by, and I beg we may not alter that Constitution thou pretendest to be such a strenuous Advocate for.

Before we run too hastily into Impeachments, let us consider what the Nation has ever got by them: You run us back to the Reigns of *Edward* and *Richard the Second*; but alas, that is no Example to modern Ages; Time has varied the Face of Affairs. Every testy Lord then, that had received the
least

least Disgust, flew presently to Arms, drew out the rusty Sword and Target, and stood on the Defence ; asserting, as you say, *their undoubted Right to punish the Oppressions of Court Favourites*, and for the most Part, with design to root them out, and bring themselves in. This you merrily call *Weeding their Councils by Parliamentary Impeachments*.

But the World, *Squire*, is grown wiser now, Rebellions are not so rife, the Laws have been wonderfully strengthened, Men will know very well what Grounds they go on, before they hazard their Lives and Estates ; so that the Occasions for *Parliamentary Impeachments* do not seem so useful now, as they have been formerly, or very probably were in the Days you quote to us.

It is besides requisite to the Reputation of a Party, to be pretty sure of making their Impeachments good, otherwise they sink in the Opinion of those who are lookers on ; and it will very naturally follow, that to do this, they may strain a Point beyond the
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Common Rules of Justice. I speak of all Party Impeachments, which I shall never like, unless I could see them carried on by a disinterested Spirit ; as, were Persons should be Impeached by those of the same Party, I should then think it was grounded on Fact, and not on Party Politicks.

You say, *Squire, The British Nation expects this* : I believe indeed, the Rumour has gained ground, but that is no warrant for the Justice, or Necessity of it. People may expect what they don't approve ; the Mariner expects a Storm, but could wish it were to be avoided. Not that I am averse to the Power or Reasonableness of Impeachments more than you : I think there is sometimes an absolute Necessity for them ; but when I see the Humour spring up in an improper Place, among People whose Ears are always open to a bloody Story, as their Breasts are sway'd by prejudice, I judge there is no very good Foundation for it ; which if there were, we should soon have it from the Fountain Head.

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There is besides this, the Probability of Succeeding in an Impeachment, which otherwise may be attended with unexpected ill Consequences. You may call to mind, *Squire*, that some Lords were Impeached in the Reign of King *William*, and even the Noble Lord you now write to; but if I remember rightly, the Party which Impeached them, never recovered the Credit they lost by it, during that Reign at least.

If I am to be Judge of the Accusations that make the Necessity of these Impeachments just, from the rough Draught you have published, I shall then believe there is little solidity in it; and if there be any secret Evidences of it, which State Policy obliges to be kept so, then you are as much in the Dark, *Squire*, as my self; I have only zealously advanced your Opinion in Assistance of the State, and may receive their Thanks for it, if they think your Service deserving.

As to my self, I shall not pretend to give my Opinion, yet I beg leave to quote a few Words out of a late Book, which are agreeable to the Sentiments I have of it at present.

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‘ The Parliament, says this Author,
 ‘ advised the Peace, approved the Terms,
 ‘ as well before, as after it was done, in
 ‘ the strongest manner. The Queen, pur-
 ‘ suant to their Advice, concluded it; and
 ‘ the Ministry were the Servants of both
 ‘ in Transacting it; which if they can
 ‘ be called to Account for, then no Hu-
 ‘ mane Power can protect a British Sub-
 ‘ ject in the Service of the *British Nation*.

Here, *Squire*, till you and I are better informed, let us leave the Matter, as I am fain to do at present, being really verry sleepy, and tired with Writing. One thing I have to request in the Conclusion, that you will let me know how you approve my Notion of Vindicating you from being the *Son* of old S——m. If it be any *Service* to you, I will proceed on it in a *Second Part*.

I am, dear *Squire*,

Yours, &c.

F I N I S.

